

you in a nice way impart all this to your sister and get the bird to those people so they would understand the gift and not resent my presumption as an intrusion?"

"Bless you, yes," declared Mrs. Agnew spontaneously. "Why! Who wouldn't say thank you for such a kindly offering," and that settled it and Dick in his cage was delivered by Mrs. Agnew to the landlady next door.

Merrill glanced across the court with a good deal of interest the next morning. The window was up and its curtain fluttering in the breeze. He viewed a form vaguely outlined, half shielded by the lace drapery. A fair white hand motioned, not to him, but evidently to the little one. There was a cry of excitement audible to Merrill. Then, in her pretty night robe, the little child ran up to the window, the cage in her hands. She set it upon the sill, she drew back with a bewildering smile of gratitude, bowed with the grace of some titled lady and kissed her dainty finger tips to the donor of the feathered pet.

The memory of the face of Miss Thirty-one lingered in the thoughts of Merrill all that day. "Miss," they had called her. Then possibly not wife, mother nor widow. And the little one had mightily attracted him, too. The mystery of their seclusion gave an added spice to the situation. There might be call for a chivalrous attention. At least, the proximity was pleasant. He would miss the bird, but the next morning the little child appeared at the window again and warmed his heart with her innocent, grateful smiles.

"I'll take a box of those," said Merrill to a clerk in a toy store two evenings later, and started homeward with a box of building blocks under his arm. The landlady smiled covertly as he indicated their desired destination.

The weather changed during the night and it was too chilly for open windows the next morning, but as

he glanced at the one across the court Merrill was greeted with a pyramidal message on the inside sill, formed of the painted wooden alphabet blocks: "Thank you."

"I'm glad Miss Thirty-one takes no offense," reflected Merrill. "It is something to keep me from the megrims — having that little one to think of."

He left out reference to the one that was not little, and rather testily resented a quick mental suggestion that his interest in the young lady in question was a growing one, and that there was a tinge of hypocrisy in indicating the child as the object of attention.

One evening Merrill, passing a ladies' bazaar shop, saw Miss Thirty-one and the little one inside. He glanced through the window to see the young lady produce some home-made lace, which was measured and paid for. As they came out he followed, but did not approach them. He observed an ill-favored man slouch stealthily after them, carefully note the building they entered and sneak away.

It was early the next morning when Merrill arose and threw up his window to air the room. His first glance was at the one opposite. It was closed, but revealed, standing sideways, Miss Thirty-one. She was apparently speaking to some one in the room and fumbling with the building blocks. Merrill noticed that her hand trembled and that her face was unnaturally pale. Suddenly she flashed a single glance at him. Eloquent pleading was in her eyes. Then her fingers moved among the scattered blocks, and then, slowly, but with precision, she spelled out three words: "Help—come quick!"

Merrill was down the steps in a flash. He hurried into the next building, he located the room opposite to his own, across the court. He stood still and listened. There was a rustling against the other side of the door and it moved as if some-